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SOME CHRISTMAS PLEASURES.

If life were all like Christmas Eve, what a splendid time of it we should have! Not Christmas Day; that is too much rest to be prolonged; but the busy Eve brimful of good-will. Good-will is the Christmas spirit; his face is smiling; the breath of his wings is warm; and wherever he is made at home, he brings the Christmas gift of peace, about which the angels sang long ago.

Now, though we can idealise good-will, as a festive spirit with light in his face and warmth in his wings, we must not stop at the poetry, or the real invisible spirit will not come and sit by our hearths. Some people do stop at the poetry; we all know that. Their good wishes end with the cards. Let us not be of the number. The words of greeting are all very well; but if they mean anything, they turn into deeds. The contriving and doing of these loving deeds is the best pleasure of the season; it is the secret of a merry Christmas. Let any one try the two plans, and practical experiment will prove the truth of our suggestions. Plan for one's self-enjoyment, and chiefly for one's self, and the best of feasting is but refined gluttony; plan to share all pleasures, and there is what Mrs Browning calls the lifting of things common till they rise and touch the spheres.

We are not going to deal here with bounty to the poor: from time immemorial, charity has outpoured during the great home festival, and outpoured, one might almost say, as a debt of the rich, from the royal dole down to the offering of the well-cared-for child to needy children. This we take for granted, to begin with; and turn to the other method of giving—the giving not of necessities, but of pleasure; and simple pleasure, after all, may be perhaps counted as a necessity, too, for human nature.

To look first at the home circle. There is a charming custom, coming, like the Christmas trees, from Germany: each member of the family smuggles into the house a gift for every one of the

others—not a present chosen at haphazard in a hurry, but something known to be desirable, sought out with care long beforehand, or made in secret, but in any case purchased out of trifling savings, and sometimes at the cost of little acts of self-denial on the children's part. Meanwhile, the parents have prepared the laden and lighted fir-tree; and the whole exhibition of universal present-giving is spread round the room, when at the first bell all assemble outside, and at the second bell the door opens and lets in the merry crowd to their feast of surprises.

The visit of Santa Claus is another custom that ought to be cultivated. The merest trifles please the little ones, if those trifles have got into their small stockings, hung ready on the end of the bed. Santa Claus came down the chimney in the night. To the children it is no superstition; in the depth of their mind they put him with the fairies, and with the doll that is half believed to be alive. Such a belief is understood to be a thing of imagination, like their plays of pretence.

Talking of children—among Christmas pleasures is the giving of a children's party on a sensible plan. The hours might be about four to eight; the meal simple and pretty; the playroom empty; a programme arranged to avoid awkward pauses; and lastly, perhaps, a Father Christmas. The mysterious figure enters with white wig and beard, and long brown cloak and hood dotted with artificial snow. He carries a holly branch for a sceptre, and a basket is slung on his shoulder. Out of this basket come various little treasures for the children; and while the younger ones accept them with awe, the elder ones begin to guess who is the visitor in masquerade.

To a certain extent, all sensible folks are inclined to be more simple and hearty, more like children, at this time of the year. Perhaps that is why the pantomimes still keep going. Now, if the pantomime has to be seen, how is it to be made into a great Christmas pleasure? Why, by securing the company of some hard-

working young acquaintance who otherwise could not go, who, perhaps, has never gone before, and who will be strengthened by an evening's amusement that will brighten half the coming year. This extra one in the party will give worth and value to the whole excursion, and the transient play will become precious. First, there is the clear cold night, the gay anticipation only more cheery for the frosty weather. Then the drive—at least to one of the party an unusual indulgence; the gayest spirit irrepressibly singing scraps of opera amid the jolting and rattle of glass, as the fun becomes infectious; then the anxiety about being in time, which is only a pretended anxiety, as everybody knows the rush has been made a whole delicious hour too soon, instead of a minute too late. Then breathless excitement—the street of the theatre is crowded from end to end. Wilder excitement still; the very last reserved places are secured, and by the most delightful chance, they are the very best in the whole house—at least the party think so, of course, and tell each other with much congratulation, for all goes smoothly to-night on the golden wheels of that one tender little kindness. Then there is the pleasant hour for cakes and programmes, and to our hard-worker it is, oddly enough, a treat to have tea at a marble table with a trim waitress in attendance. And at last, at last, back to the theatre, and up goes the curtain! The presence of the happy friend is as magic, turning that poor old tinsel pantomime into a most magnificent show. There never were such glorious scenes, bewildering to mortal eyes. There never was before, or since, so much to laugh at in a pantomime. We sit it out like children till the nursery tale has dissolved in confusion of splendour, and the clown has brought us down to earth with the string of sausages, and done his worst with the red-hot poker. And then we come out under the sparkling stars. Titania herself in fairyland,

Lulled by the flowers around her
With laughter and delight,

shall not sleep on happier pillow than ours after such a night. The joy of a tired heart has done it all; and by the touch, our tinsel pleasure turns to gold.

The time of holiday-making ought to last by rights from Christmas Eve till Twelfth Night. We may have to return to our occupations long before the twelfth day; but let us keep up the glow of mirth and rejoicing, and end with some home celebration, though we may not aspire to the old rites of the figured Twelfth Cake and the King and Queen.

During the first part of this festal time it is still not too late for carol-singing. The beautiful old carols ought to form part of the evening music in the house. Venturesome singers have before now surprised village neighbourhoods by singing with trained voices, incognito, outside the country-houses. A good deal of fun and daring accompanied the freak, and the money sent out to the minstrels was scrupulously forwarded to some local hospital.

Before the Christmas season ends, the New Year has begun. As the months pass, it takes one's breath away to remember with a sudden pause that this was the year we wished happy

for every friend we met. Before the autumn, if we consider our friends one by one, how little have our wishes turned into deeds! But here is a fresh chance; here is the truce of kindness, that comes in mid-winter like a strong sunshine for a fortnight. Let us make up our minds that 'a merry Christmas and a happy New Year' are to be empty words no more. It may be in our power to make them into realities.

And lo! while we have been thinking and planning, the angel of good-will has come to sit at home beside our hearths; and hidden in the folds of his raiment he holds the gift of peace. Why should he ever go away? Why should not the presence of good-will make life be all like Christmas Eve?

MR ESHOLT'S YOUNG WIFE.

A STORY IN TWELVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER XI.

'I FAIL to understand you, Mr Vampy,' Wilmot contrived to stammer. It seemed to him that his strange visitor, who was now nibbling a quill pen, had all at once taken leave of his senses.

Diving deep with one hand into an inner breast-pocket of his coat, Mr Vampy drew therefrom a tiny phial filled with a colourless fluid, which he held for a moment or two in front of the lamp and gazed at with his peculiar enigmatical smile.

'You would not'—gasped Wilmot.

'Nothing is further from my thoughts,' returned the other dryly. 'We may all live to be hanged, for aught we know, but it would be folly to hasten the day.' Then resting his elbows on the table, but retaining the phial in his hand, he said: 'What we have to do is simply to retard Mr Esholt's recovery for a little while, which is exactly what the contents of this phial will do for us.—No doubt, an overdose of it might prove fatal, but the same might be laid to the charge of half the specifics in the pharmacopœia. It is a vegetable essence, the secret of which was confided to me by an Italian whose life I had saved in a street brawl when I was a student at the Hôtel Dieu—for, strange as it may seem to you, I was originally intended for the medical profession. Curious way for a fellow to show his gratitude, wasn't it? Well, sir, such are the properties of my essence that six drops of it, mixed with an ordinary sized bottle of medicine, will induce in the patient who imbibes it a certain languor, a lethargy both of mind and body—a sort of lotus-eater's feeling carried to excess—which, so long as he continues to take it, will render him totally indifferent to all the ordinary duties and responsibilities of life and crave only to be let quietly alone.' Mr Vampy scratched his chin reflectively with his little finger. 'Unless I am mistaken,' he went on, 'I saw a bottle of medicine on the hall table as I came in.'

'I daren't do it,' exclaimed Wilmot in a hoarse whisper.

'As you please, *mon ami*, as you please,' answered the other as he put the phial back into his pocket. 'The twenty-fourth will soon be here. Should *Persephone* come in first, though

only by a neck, of course you'll be as right as a trivet; otherwise— But no; the reverse of the picture may be left to your own imagination—especially with Mr Esholt back at business.' He rose and pushed away his chair. 'I won't ask you to put your name to that little document for the extra hundred just now. I must, in fact, consult my firm before taking any further steps in the matter. It may perhaps become a question with them whether their wisest policy will not be to seek an interview with Mr Esholt himself in the morning, and at once bring the affair to a climax either in one form or another.' He moved towards the side-table on which were his hat and umbrella.

'Stop!' cried Wilmot as he sprang to his feet. 'Sit down again, Mr Vampy, I beg of you.'

Mr Vampy shrugged his shoulders slightly and did as he was asked.

Wilmot crossed to the door and, half opening it, stood for a moment or two listening; then he went quickly out, and after an absence of about a quarter of a minute, came back, carrying Dr Pyefitt's last bottle of medicine in its white paper wrapper. Resuming his seat, he said: 'Give me the phial. Six drops, you said, didn't you?' He broke the seals and drew the bottle out of its wrapper, but making a tear in the latter as he did so. His whole air and manner were those of a man wound up to the utmost degree of tension. Vampy handed him the phial without a word.

Wilmot uncorked the bottle and then the phial; but when he held them up in front of the lamp for the purpose of pouring the requisite number of drops from one into the other, his hands trembled so much that it was an evident impossibility for him to do so. Twice again he essayed, but to no purpose. Looking across at Vampy, he said: 'If you were to offer me a thousand pounds down I couldn't do it just now.'

'Infirm of purpose! Give me the bottles,' cried the other lightly. Wilmot needed no second bidding.

The ex-student's hands lacked nothing in the way of steadiness. In less than two minutes the transfer was effected and the bottle recorked and sealed up again in its wrapper with a stick of Mr Esholt's wax. Wilmot had looked on with fascinated eyes. When the sixth drop fell from the lip of the phial, a shudder ran through him. He felt at that moment as if he had just bargained away the immortal part of himself to the Evil One—or, which came to the same thing, to one of his agents in the guise of a little podgy man, dressed in shiny black, with two great black studs in his shirt front and an ill-concealed grin, half sarcastic and half contemptuous, contorting his commonplace features. What bliss it would have been to be able to clutch the little animal by the throat and fling him bodily out of the window!

'There is the bottle, which it may be as well to take back at once,' said Mr Vampy blandly. 'And here is the phial. Remember, six drops—no more and no less—to-morrow and every evening. There's enough here to last you a week; but before then I shall doubtless have seen you again.'

Wilmot left the room and replaced the bottle where he had found it. When he came back, Mr Vampy was drawing on his gloves. 'I won't say good-bye, but *au revoir*,' he remarked. 'As I'm so much overdue at another place, I will defer getting you to sign that note for the extra hundred till our next meeting.'

At this moment there came a tap at the door, and then a servant appeared. 'Mr Esholt would like to speak to you, sir,' she said to Wilmot.

'Good-night,' said Mr Vampy, holding out his hand, which the other took half unwillingly. Then in a whisper: 'Let us hope and pray that *Persephone* may win in a canter.'

'Mary, the door for this gentleman,' was Wilmot's sole reply.

Left alone, he stood for some moments with bowed head, one hand pressed to his heart, the other resting heavily on the table. 'And this is what I have brought myself to!' he muttered, with the concentrated bitterness of one in whose heart the fountain of goodness has not yet been wholly choked by vile weeds. 'Why did not that African fever kill me? Better so a hundred times than that I should have lived to sink to this!' With a sigh that was half a groan, he gathered up a handful of papers and slowly left the room.

Scarcely was the door shut behind him when the *portière* was lifted and Agnes emerged from her hiding-place. She was chilled to the bone through standing so long in the fireless room, but she had no consciousness of it. Heart and mind alike were overwhelmed by the terrible revelation to which she had been an unwilling listener.

'O Wilmot, Wilmot!' broke from her in a low agonised cry; and with it were scattered to the winds the dead ashes, never to be rekindled, of her first love.

She passed out of the room like a woman half tranced, with distended eyes, and hands that unwittingly touched the furniture as she passed. But when she reached the entrance-hall and her glance fell on the bottle, which was still where Wilmot had left it, her mind came back with a vivid shock to present actualities and all that it behoved her yet to do. Taking up the bottle, she hid it away in the pocket of her dress, then hurrying up-stairs to her room, she rang the bell. To the servant who answered the summons, she said: 'Let some one go at once to Dr Pyefitt's and obtain a fresh bottle of medicine. The one already sent has met with an accident.' The bottle she had brought up-stairs she locked away in her writing-desk.

She bathed her hands and face and fastened up her hair afresh, but it was all done automatically. She felt a strange sense of elation; she knew not whence it came, nor why, neither did she care to know. It was that species of mental elation, not necessarily allied to gladness, which comes to us at times after some great crises in life. She had parted from the past for ever. The time of weakness and doubting fears had gone by. Clear before her shone the path her feet must henceforth tread, not bordered with flowers, indeed, nor gladdened with sunshine as far as it was yet visible, but by no means unbeautiful to her eyes.

Mr Esholt's rooms opened out of a corridor

on the right of the landing, hers out of one on the left. She waited, listening, for nearly half an hour, till she heard the door of her husband's room open and shut; and then, standing in her own darkened doorway, her lamp having been turned down to a mere spark, she watched Wilnot go down-stairs. Now was her opportunity; her courage was high within her.

She had crossed the landing and reached the other corridor, when her husband's door was again opened, and Miss Esholt appeared, in the act of being wheeled out in her chair by Davry. Agnes came to an abrupt stand till Davry had shut the door behind her mistress and herself. Then, pale, resolute, defiant even, but never more beautiful than at that moment, she went a few steps nearer and said: 'Is that woman, that nurse, whom you engaged, coming to watch to-night by my husband's side?'

'I expect her here almost at any moment,' replied Miss Esholt with icy composure.

'Then you may request her to go home again. Her services are no longer required. From this time forward I shall nurse my husband myself.'

'If you choose to take the responsibility!'

'I do choose to take it. From this hour Mr Esholt will be under my care, and no stranger shall come between us.'

'You seem to have arrived at your determination rather late in the day,' answered Miss Esholt with an almost imperceptible sneer. 'You have doubtless been told that my brother is recovering; and if you choose to come forward now that the danger is over, and take all the credit of nursing him to yourself, you are of course at liberty to do so.'

'I did not come here, Miss Esholt, to bandy idle words. I have told you my intentions, and I mean them to be carried out.' Without a word more she passed the chair and its occupant and went forward into her husband's room.

'Well, I never!' exclaimed Davry with a sniff, as she began to propel the chair again. 'It was an ill day for us, mistress, when that peart young thing took it into her head to set her cap at th' master.'

'She has done to-day what she ought to have done at first. I admire her for it,' was Miss Esholt's reply.

Davry shook her head. Her mistress's speeches often puzzled her: this was merely one more added to the number. 'I've something to tell you about her when we are in our room and the door shut,' was all she replied.

Agnes passed through the dressing-room and, pushing the bedroom door softly open, looked in. Mr Esholt, gaunt and wan, his back propped high with pillows, lay staring at the opposite wall, but seeing nothing save with the mind's inward eye. His wife stood for a moment or two before advancing, and tears came into her eyes as she gazed. He started when she moved, and turning his head, welcomed her with a faint smile. She took his hand and pressed it to her lips, and then bending forward, kissed him very tenderly. Looking at her with a little surprise, he read in her eyes something he had yearned to see there ever since he had made her his wife, but had never beheld till now.

'Are you come to stay with me a little while?' he asked.

'I am come to stay with you a long, long time, dear Robert, if you will let me,' she whispered softly, with her cheek laid close to his. 'I have neglected you too long. Can you forgive me? I will never neglect you again.'

It was not the words merely, though they sounded like sweetest music in his ears, but the tone of heartfelt tenderness with which they were spoken that moved him to the depths of his being. A faint flush stole into his white hollow cheeks: he lay for a little while, her hand tightly pressed in his. 'But we must think of your health, dear,' he said at last. 'The nurse is used to sitting up, and—'

'You must let me have my own way in this. I do not intend that woman to come near you again; I do not intend to lose sight of you again till you are quite well; but I do intend to be obeyed. So not another word, if you love me.' She beamed down upon him with such a beautiful smile, that all the gloomy thoughts and forebodings which had held possession of his soul but a little while before fled before it, as the weird shapes which haunt the darkness flee before the coming dawn.

A little later Mr Esholt fell asleep, still holding his wife's hand. It was one of those refreshing childlike sleeps which sometimes come after the turn of an illness, and do the patient more good in a few hours than long days of nursing. Looking round after a time to note the arrangements for the night, Agnes all at once bethought herself of the bottle of medicine she had ordered to be fetched from Dr Pyefitt's. It ought to have been brought up-stairs before now, but this was Bridget's evening out, which perhaps accounted for the delay. She would go and fetch it herself while her husband was asleep; to ring the bell and summon a servant might disturb him.

When Wilnot Burrell was summoned for the second time to Mr Esholt's room, just as Mr Vampy was taking his leave, it was to receive his employer's instructions with regard to a certain statement, overlooked by him before, which he wished to have ready for Mr Kimber by the morrow, all the data for which were contained in certain papers Wilnot already had by him. When Wilnot came down-stairs again on his way to the study he was too much pre-occupied to notice that the bottle of medicine was no longer on the hall table. The statement asked for by Mr Esholt involved a number of intricate calculations; but when he sat down to work them out, he found his mind so thoroughly unhinged by the scene he had gone through with Mr Vampy that the figures became a wild jumble in his brain; nor, despite all his efforts, could he reduce them to any sequence sufficiently coherent to enable him to work out the required result. At length he flung the papers aside. 'I'll turn out at six in the morning,' he muttered. 'My head will be as clear as a bell by that time. Meanwhile, a three or four mile stretch and a cigar will do me no harm. Confound it all! *Persephone must win.*'

He turned out the lamp, and taking the papers with him, he quitted the room. On crossing the hall this time his eye was attracted by the bottle on the table. It was singular, he thought, that it had not yet been taken up-stairs. Then something seemed to whisper to him: 'It is

not too late. There is a chance still left you. Take the bottle—hide it—break it, as if by accident—do anything rather than leave it to work out its fell purpose on the man to whom you owe so much!’ For a few moments there was a struggle within him; his fingers even closed round the bottle; but then came a thought which strangled his half-born purpose and hardened him again to the point of desperation. ‘Dare you face the chances of the twenty-fourth, unless you do this thing?’ and he acknowledged to himself that he dare not. He was on the point of putting down the bottle, when a sudden flash across his mind nearly blinded him.

This was not the same bottle as that into which Vampy had poured the six drops of his essence! The wrapper of that one was torn—he himself had torn it in breaking open the seal—while the wrapper of this was intact. Dr Pyefitt would hardly send two bottles in the course of an hour—that seemed absurd on the face of it—yet this was certainly not the bottle that had been tampered with. Why was this one here, and what had become of the other? He put back the bottle and went to his room, feeling more disturbed in his mind than he cared to own. A few minutes later he left his room, dressed for going out. As he reached the head of the stairs, Agnes was coming up with the bottle in her hand. He stood for a moment to allow her to pass. As she reached the topmost stair, her eyes met his. Never had he seen such an expression in them before—and it was on him, Wilmot Burrell, that the look was bent. He read in it repulsion, loathing, and contempt unutterable. ‘Agnes!’ he exclaimed, and then he stopped in utter amazement. But she swept past him without a word. A spasm, the like of which he had never felt before, constricted his heart as he gazed after her. What was the meaning of that look? Was anything suspected—anything known? And yet, how could there be? His interview with Vampy was enough to reassure him on that score. Still, Agnes’s inexplicable look, following so close on his discovery in connection with the bottles, was enough to render him seriously uneasy. He lighted his cigar and went forth into the cool night-air with many disquieting thoughts gnawing his heart-strings like so many birds of prey.

Agnes, finding her husband still asleep, sat down to think. The sight of Wilmot brought to her mind the necessity for at once asking herself a certain question which had already been floating vaguely in her mind. Ought she, or ought she not, to warn him?—that was the question. Ought she to tell him that all was known—that his nefarious scheme had come to naught—and that if he did not dare to face the consequences, he had better fly while there was yet time to do so? In a few hours at most, everything must be told to Mr Esholt, and it was impossible for her even to guess what action he might choose to take in the affair. She knew which course approved itself both to her heart and her conscience; but there was the duty she owed her husband to remember as well. Then there came over her the recollection of those old happy days at the vicarage when Wilmot and she were boy and girl together, before any whisper of love had been breathed between

them, and she hesitated no longer. ‘Surely it is impossible that he can be altogether vile,’ she said to herself. ‘There must be some “soul of goodness” in him yet.’ Taking a scrap of paper, she wrote on it, ‘All is known.’ Only those three words. They would suffice to warn him. Whatever action, consequent thereon, he might choose to take was a matter for himself to decide. Having sealed the paper, she rang the bell, and then went as far as the head of the stairs to meet the servant who answered it, to whom she gave the packet with directions to place it in Mr Burrell’s room where he would be sure to see it. Then she went back to her vigil, feeling as if a weight had been lifted off her heart.

THE DAILY PRESS AT THE ANTIPODES.

BY AN AUSTRALIAN JOURNALIST.

I SUPPOSE, in most particulars journalism is carried on in Australia after much the same fashion as in England; but there are a few important differences, and under any circumstances the information I am about to give may be of interest to those who aspire to a high place in the ‘fourth estate,’ and who are looking outside the tight little island for a career. Nearly every large town in Australia has its daily; but what I shall refer to chiefly are the newspapers issued every morning or evening from the capitals; the others partaking of the character of local papers, and therefore being worked on an entirely different basis.

Probably few Englishmen are aware that in proportion to population, some of the Australian city dailies have a much larger circulation than any of the London papers. A Melbourne daily guarantees a circulation of over sixty-two thousand, and the colony of Victoria has a population of only a million; while an Adelaide office which issues a morning and an evening paper sells one copy to every eleven inhabitants of South Australia. The proportion is also very large in the case of the chief New South Wales and Queensland papers. Taking the whole issue of the dailies in the principal capitals into account, the circulation may be estimated as follows: Melbourne, one hundred and thirty thousand; Sydney, one hundred and thirty-five thousand; Adelaide, fifty thousand; and Brisbane, forty-seven thousand. Melbourne has fewer dailies in proportion to its population than any other capital; while Adelaide has, I believe, the most. Nearly all the dailies in the important capitals are very wealthy concerns, the net incomes in two or three cases averaging over forty thousand pounds each. I do not propose, however, to deal with the papers from a commercial point of view, but to allude to the conduct of the literary department, with the object of affording information to young British journalists.

The managers of the Australian dailies differ from those of the great European and American dailies in attaching relatively very much more importance to local than to general news. This preference is, however, gradually wearing away with the improvements in the means of communication, and the increasing attention given to the colonies by the outside world. A great change

has taken place in this respect in the last few years. The London and intercolonial telegrams occupy three or four times the space in a daily of the present time than in one of ten years ago. Still, on first coming to the colonies, Englishmen think it very strange that more general British news is not given in the colonial papers. Men soon get used to this, however; but I am afraid it takes years before English ladies cease to wonder how it is that the editors of their morning papers prefer local news to British politics and London gossip. The papers devote a considerable portion of their space to outdoor pastimes, particularly cricket and football, on account of the intense interest taken in these games by a very large section of the colonial public. Football is especially popular, every match in a capital between any two of the leading clubs being attended by thousands, comprising all classes of the community.

The editors of the Australian dailies vary considerably in their opinions upon the class of leading article most suitable for colonial readers. Those of some of the best papers care little about commenting upon the events of the hour, but set all their energies to work to obtain well-written leaders that compel the reading. It matters little whether the articles refer to social, scientific, or political subjects, so long as they are capable productions. Of course, when an important event, such as a great colliery disaster, occurs, a leader or sub-leader thereupon is required for the following day; and when parliament is in session, debates will often be immediately dealt with; but as a rule, subject gives way to treatment. Other editors, again, consider it their duty to fill two, three, or four columns of bourgeois type every day with leading matter upon current topics, and these do not appear to rank good writing as the first desideratum in a leader. Such articles are usually written in the office by permanent members of the staff, and are simply 'ground out,' as must necessarily be the case. A leader-writer goes to his office at eight or nine o'clock in the evening without perhaps the faintest idea of what his night's work will consist of; and he may then be called upon to write a leader upon almost any subject 'under the sun' for the paper of the following morning. It may be upon a boat-race, the discovery of a mine, a new code of police regulations, the weather, the arrival of distinguished visitors, the latest development in the theory of evolution, an unwise speech by a bishop, statistical tables, marine insurance, agriculture, something in regard to one of the Acts of Parliament, or, in fact, any subject which the imagination of the editor can conceive as being important just at the time. It may or may not be a subject upon which the writer is well informed; but in any case he takes the matter calmly from habit, and is soon setting his pen going. Such a paper has always a local subject for the first leader, and if there should happen to be nothing in particular stirring, the Blue-books are resorted to. The third class of Australian editor is a combination between the two already cited. He likes a local subject to lead off with, and keeps one or two stock leader-writers; but for the other leading matter he will have contributions from outside the office. He has always at his command half-a-dozen or more of the most able writers in the city for general

subjects; while he seldom fails to find a specialist to assist him when required.

The system of management of the literary staff varies throughout the colonies. In two or three of the principal papers in Melbourne and Sydney, the staff contains several members whose work is confined to one department, as in the case of the London dailies. But in the dailies of the other capitals there is seldom to be found a man who is the sporting editor, the dramatic editor, or the agricultural editor and nothing else. The sporting editor, for instance, may also be the dramatic editor, and may be called upon to report upon almost anything that does not require mere note-taking, from a new painting to a system of sanitation. Thus, it comes about that in cities of lesser importance, such as Adelaide, Brisbane, and Hobart, reporters gain a comparatively wide experience. Adelaide has the reputation of being the best Australian training-ground for reporters; and journalists who have been brought up or have gained their colonial experience there are to be found in responsible positions on nearly all the leading papers of the other colonies. From a reporting point of view, the experience of Australians is much the same as that of English scribes; but there is one department which has not, I believe, its parallel in the old country; this is what is technically known as 'doing the ministers,' or 'doing the departments.' On every daily paper in the colonial capitals one or two reporters are told off for this work, which consists of interviewing the members of the government and the heads of sub-departments, to ascertain if there is anything of public importance to make known. For instance, the reporter will ask the Commissioner for Trade and Customs whether any new light has been thrown upon a certain smuggling case; the Premier will be asked for the latest development of the New Hebrides question; the Minister of Water Supply for particulars of an irrigation scheme proposed to be carried out; and the Commissioner of Crown Lands for his opinion on a new rabbit exterminator. And colonial ministers are not particularly reticent, unless there is special cause for being so. The daily press has enormous power, and the ministers like to please the reporters. Moreover, they are mostly gratified if their names can be kept before the public, especially in connection with financial or land-law reforms. Often there is a perfect *rapprochement* between ministers and reporters. The reporter knows what he may ask and how he may ask it; and the minister knows that he is quite free in explaining a political puzzle to his interviewer, who will publish nothing likely to compromise his informant. After many years of experience, I never remember a falling-out between a minister and a reporter on account of a breach of faith. 'Doing the departments' sometimes occupies a reporter several hours in the course of a day; so it will be understood that the work is not light. The particular qualification required for this kind of interviewing is, of course, diplomacy.

Coming to the question of pay, a subject upon which perhaps British journalists are the least enlightened in regard to the Australian press, I may say that the editor of a daily gets from five hundred to one thousand pounds a year. I know one who had twelve hundred and fifty pounds; but the average may be taken at about seven

hundred and fifty or eight hundred pounds. On two or three papers there is a literary manager as well as an editor, but usually one of the proprietors fills this post. Sometimes, also, as in the case of the Adelaide dailies, the editor is a proprietor. A good manager when not a proprietor will get from six to eight hundred pounds per annum. Permanent leader-writers (on the staff) have from four to seven hundred pounds a year, and for this they each write perhaps five leaders a week. Outside leader-writers get paid from a guinea to three guineas an article. On some papers the usual pay is two guineas; on others, thirty shillings; and others, again, a guinea. For general contributions one pound a column is paid by some journals, and by others so much for the article according to its character and length. I have known a Melbourne paper pay five pounds a column (minion type) for a series of descriptive articles. Sub-editors get from eight to twelve pounds a week, the amount varying not so much in accordance with the ability of the sub as with the wealth of the proprietary. The work of the subs is much the same everywhere, and indeed if there is any difference, the worst paid have the most to do, inasmuch as on wealthy papers the sub-editor is allowed an assistant, who is paid from five to seven pounds a week.

The pay of reporters varies up to ten pounds a week, this wage, however, only being paid to one or two leaders of staffs. The leader of the staff on an average daily will receive seven or eight pounds a week; and capable reporters from five to nine pounds; but more than seven pounds is not often paid. The latter sum is the wage of the parliamentary hands in Melbourne; but such reporters must be good general writers, apart from their proficiency in shorthand. In Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and New Zealand, there are government Hansard staffs who give close reports of the proceedings in parliament, and are also called upon to report the doings of Royal Commissions and Select Committees of inquiry. The head of a government Hansard staff receives about six hundred pounds a year; the second in command, five hundred pounds; and the others from three hundred and fifty to four hundred and fifty pounds. It will thus be seen that good general reporters are not paid so well as government 'Hansarders,' though the qualifications of the latter are little more than a knowledge of shorthand writing. It is certainly an anomaly that a good descriptive writer who is also a fast stenographer should in the same city receive less remuneration for his services than one who can perhaps do nothing beyond the mere mechanical shorthand routine. It may be remarked, however, that many of the best government stenographers have been obtained from the newspaper offices.

There is no regular scale of pay for junior reporters. It used to be the custom of some newspaper proprietors in Australia to take article pupils for a term of from four to six years. There would be no premium, but, on the contrary, the indentured youth would receive a small salary—about thirty pounds a year to start with—which would increase by annual instalments until he was out of his time, when he would perhaps be taken on the regular staff at a wage of three pounds a week. If he showed himself capable, in three or four years he would be getting five pounds a

week; but it would depend entirely on his own exertions. The system of apprenticing is, however, now dying out; but there is no lack of youths willing to enter upon the profession of journalism. From a monetary point of view, there can be no doubt that a lad has a better chance of moving forward in a newspaper office if he enters it as an ordinary beginner than by signing articles. But he must work exceedingly hard, be at the beck and call of the office for twelve or fourteen hours a day for months at a stretch, and at the same time must increase his general and local knowledge. The harder he works and the less he grumbles, the better it is for him.

I must not leave the question of salaries without referring to the special departments on the daily newspapers, such as sporting, commercial, agriculture, mining, &c. The commercial editor is usually some one outside the office, who is paid at rates varying from fifty to three hundred pounds per annum for supplying every day a short summary of the various market proceedings. The work required of the commercial editor varies greatly with the different papers, hence the wide margin between the lowest and the highest rate of pay. Only two or three Australian dailies have some one specially told off to look after the mining; but this department is becoming every day of more importance here, and ere long all the leading papers will require to have a mining editor. The remuneration of the share editors varies from fifty to two hundred and fifty pounds a year. It is usually a stockbroker who supplies the daily share list, with, in some cases, a few comments upon the state of the market. Then there is the shipping man, who is, except in South Australia, a member of the permanent staff, and is paid at reporters' rates. In regard to agriculture, sporting, the drama, and other departments, it is necessary to explain that each of the dailies issued in the Australian capitals publishes also a weekly paper (at sixpence, except in one instance where the price is fourpence). In some cases, the weekly is made up almost entirely from matter that has been used in the dailies; and in others nearly the whole of the reading is specially written for the weekly. The latter system necessitates a separate staff, and thus it is that the same proprietary may employ two sporting editors, two dramatic editors, and so on. There is, however, never more than one agricultural editor whose special province it is to write the weekly, this being considered essentially a country newspaper; but he also occasionally writes for the corresponding daily. Sporting editors on the most flourishing weekly papers receive about ten pounds a week, and in one or two cases assistants get about seven pounds a week. On the dailies, the sporting editor is not usually paid so highly, and if he has with sporting to combine dramatic and other work, he takes rank as a general reporter and is paid as such. Sporting editors are always members of the permanent staff; but dramatic and musical editors are not invariably so. The pay of an agricultural editor who is a member of the permanent staff is about ten pounds a week; but, as in the case of a sporting editor, if he has to mix up other work with his special duties, his remuneration is much less, the reason of course being that a special knowledge is required in the one case, while in

the other a smattering is sufficient. A good sporting and agricultural writer acquires a name throughout the colonies, which is at any time worth a fair income to him.

There is another class of men who have to be paid for services rendered to the dailies; these are the country correspondents. Each daily in the capitals must have a correspondent in every town, or even village (township is the Australian word for village) throughout its colony, some papers having as many as one hundred and fifty of these communicants. Every correspondent is supplied with a free paper, and is paid at the rate of one pound per column for reports, or a small fixed sum per annum by arrangement. In a fairly large country town—for the colonies—say of four thousand inhabitants, a correspondent may earn from forty-five to seventy pounds per annum; but the average is probably not more than ten pounds, for scores of small places in the farming districts might be deserted villages for all the history they make. As for correspondents abroad, a good daily will have two London correspondents—one for despatching cable messages, and the other for writing news-letters. The former will receive a salary of from four to six hundred pounds a year; and the latter will be paid at per letter usually three guineas. Sometimes the cable correspondent also writes the news-letters. Each of the dailies has also a correspondent at Paris, New York, San Francisco, and Port Louis, and some at other places. The intercolonial correspondence is performed on the exchange system throughout, except in the case of one Melbourne paper, which has a special Sydney reporter.

A word as to the class of men most likely to earn a living on the daily press in the colonies. Men who have failed at every other profession, and take up leader-writing as a *dernier ressort*, are of no use in the colonies. A middle-aged Englishman, no matter how good his education may have been, might wait for years before he secures a position on an Australian daily, unless he is a particularly brilliant writer, or comes with good credentials from a well-known British newspaper. A university degree carries no more weight in Melbourne or Sydney in respect to journalism than it does in London. A man is judged here, as elsewhere, by his work alone. Moreover, it takes a long time before an Englishman fresh to the colonies can become acquainted with the many phases of colonial politics, and consequently if he be ever so good a writer, the sphere within which he can work is very limited for, say, two or three years. As to reporters, smart young men who are good shorthand writers and who have had a little experience might do worse than come to Australia. The colonies are not overcrowded with good reporters, and the scope for journalists is rapidly widening. Two things must be remembered, however: one is, that the market could very easily be flooded; and the other is, that reporters with colonial experience are invariably preferred to others. If, however, a reliable and capable reporter comes to either colony and takes the first appointment that offers on a good daily whatever the salary, while he looks around and learns something of colonial life and politics, he will probably not regret the step. But he must not be afraid of hard work; and if he is of a genial temperament, so much the better.

In conclusion, I may point out that apart from the prospect of ascending the ladder of journalism itself, for an energetic young man the daily press here is not a bad stepping-stone to more remunerative occupations. A reporter in an Australian city becomes acquainted with the best men there; if he has his eyes open, he perhaps soon finds out whether there is a more profitable but equally congenial means of livelihood available than the one he is engaged in; and if he has a little money by him into the bargain, he has exceptional chances of turning it over to advantage. The number of reporters who have risen to good positions in colonial life is surprising. Two members of the Victorian government and the Minister of Education for South Australia were once reporters. A late premier of New Zealand, now a K.B., was also a reporter. This gentleman entered parliamentary life under rather strange circumstances. The story goes that he was sent to report a meeting of electors held 'to consider the most fit and proper person to represent them,' at which candidates were invited to attend. At the appointed time, no candidate put in an appearance, and the late premier, who was the only representative of the press at the reporters' table, was recommended by some one in the hall to come forward. He at once acted upon the hint, ascended the platform, made a brief speech, and at the election was returned unopposed.

MR MAGSDALE'S COURTSHIP.

CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER IV.—THE CRISIS.

A SMALL, frightened-looking man was making his way down Holborn at a rapid irregular trot; his hat was crammed well home on the back of his head, and his coat-tails streamed ungracefully behind him as he hurried along, edging and pushing his way amongst the throng of passengers. He carried a paper in his hand, at which from time to time he glanced nervously, as though its folds contained some dangerous explosive which might burst with disastrous results at any moment. It was Peter Magsdale; and the paper he held was Messrs Carrel and Stalker's letter, which he was taking post-haste to Allan for his inspection. He stopped at a door whose brass plate bore the legend, 'Magsdale, Architect,' and at once proceeded to knock double-knocks industriously until he was admitted.

'What on earth has happened?' asked his cousin as he rushed into his room. 'Sit down, and if anything has gone wrong, say so.'

Peter made a supreme effort to steady himself, and took a chair. Speech could not do justice to his errand, so he handed Allan the letter with as few words as possible.

'Read that,' he said—'read that, and tell me what to do. I got it this morning.'

Allan unfolded the paper, and leisurely began to study it, whilst Peter sat, holding on by the edge of the table, watching him with hungry eagerness.

We will exercise our privilege and look over

Mr Allan Magsdale's shoulder at the storm-fraught communication.

'CRESSBURN *versus* MAGSDALE.'

SIR—We are instructed by Miss Emily Parkins, the guardian of our client, Miss Mary Cressburn, to claim from you, on behalf of her ward, the sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds, in the name of damages for non-fulfilment of your promise to marry her said ward. We are authorised to accept the above sum in settlement; but should you repudiate liability, we shall be glad to be informed of the address of your solicitors, with a view to the institution of legal proceedings.—We are, &c.,
CARREL & STALKER.

To PETER MAGSDALE, Esq.

Allan Magsdale read the letter through, and lay back in his chair, facing his cousin. 'I wonder you aren't ashamed to show that to me,' he said with infinite scorn.

Peter looked more wretchedly crest-fallen than before, but said nothing.

'When did you last see Miss Cressburn?'

'About a month ago,' faltered Peter.

'Not since you promised to take her to see Cornelia?'

'No,' was the half-whispered response.

'I can't trust myself to tell you what I think about it,' said Allan with indignant contempt; 'you'd better take it away.' He threw the letter at, rather than to, his cousin, and rising from his seat, turned his back on him, to gaze out of the window, with his hands in his pockets.

'Won't you tell me what I ought to do?' asked the miserable man after a long pause.

'Go to your solicitors,' said Allan without turning round.

'She thinks I've thrown her over,' said Peter.

'I never meant—I didn't intend to do that.'

'I don't know what else she could think.'

For two minutes Peter sat silent, staring at the carpet, and listening to the monotonous ticking of the clock: he cannot be said to have been thinking; he was lost in dazed dreams as to his position, not planning escape from it, but looking at it idly, as though it were the heading of a chapter he had not the inclination to read.

'For Heaven's sake, help me, Allan!' he wailed at length.

'What could I do, supposing I wanted to help you?' said his cousin, turning fiercely upon him.

'What shall I do?' moaned Peter. 'I'll marry her now if she will take me.'

'Wisest proviso you can make,' sneered Allan. 'How on earth you allowed things to come to such a pass, I can't think.'

'I thought perhaps she'd give way about knowing Cornelia, if I didn't go and see her for a time,' he said, a little less dolefully, for he thought that Allan was relenting, and would at least advise him how to act.

'Oh, you did, did you?'

'I did indeed. I never wanted to give her up.'

'Then you had better go and tell her so.'

Allan Magsdale returned to the table as he spoke, and looked over Messrs Carrel and Stalker's letter again. 'I don't believe Mary Cressburn has any thing to do with the despatch of this precious document.'

'Why?' asked Peter eagerly.

'Because,' replied his adviser, weighing his

words with sarcastic care, 'because she wouldn't pay you the compliment of saying you're worth the money.'

It was unpalatable; but Peter was too much engrossed with the theory itself to pay much attention to the manner in which it had been propounded.

'I'll go and see her to-night,' he said. 'Perhaps it isn't too late to—to make it all right still.'

'Perhaps it isn't,' said Allan. 'Meantime, you'd better go and ask Cornelia to lend you seven hundred and fifty pounds.'

Peter's face fell again. 'Do you really think they will press that?' he asked.

'I don't know; it would serve you right if they did; and you had better be prepared—unless you mean to let them take action.'

The shudder this shaft produced told Allan it had gone home, and he followed it up with another one.

'I shall like to hear what your sister says about the business; you might come and tell me, if you survive it.'

Peter squirmed like a piece of scorched leather, and feebly offered himself a shred of doubtful comfort. 'She need never know about it!' he said.

'I rather think she will, if she doesn't already, my friend. But I can't spend any more time over it just now; I'm busy.' And Allan sat down, and made a demonstration of selecting a pen.

Peter rose to go, but lingered about the door. 'Why do you think she must know?' he asked.

'Of course she'll hear about it,' answered his cousin sharply. 'Here, take your letter, and don't bother,' he added. He didn't want to console his cousin as well as 'advise' him, and was purposely dismissing him in as uncomfortable a frame of mind as possible—a worthy object, in which he quite succeeded.

Peter Magsdale went back to Somerset House, and pondered over the terrible muddle his procrastinating folly had led him into. He must see Mary Cressburn that evening at any cost, and so convinced was he of the necessity of this, that he did what he had never ventured to do before: he telegraphed to Mrs Bunshaw saying that an engagement would detain him until late. He could not trust to the chance of getting out after dinner if he went home as usual. When Miss Terripeg was not with them, his sister had always some good reason for keeping him at home: the Society's accounts to audit, or its correspondence to attend to. Anything but a direct exercise of her inflexible will, which that astute woman knew better than to bring into too frequent use.

'She won't believe it, and there's sure to be a row,' he sighed as he sent away the message; 'but I can't help that. I wish to Heaven I could see the end of it all!'

This threatened action for breach of promise looked dreadfully formidable; but surely he had nothing to fear from that. If he went down to Queen's Road and explained that he wished to adhere to his engagement, and had never any intention of throwing Mary Cressburn over, he could cut the ground from under her feet. If she consented to receive him again, he would be very much where he had been before; and if she refused to have anything more to do with him,

no proceedings she could institute would hold water for a moment. For the present he would continue to regard himself as engaged to her in spite of the solicitors' letter.

The day dragged slowly on; and at five o'clock he muffled himself up in his coat and went out to seek a restaurant where he could get his dinner. He dawdled over the meal until it was time to go down to Putney, and uncomfortable as he was about the meeting before him, he was almost glad that he had not much more time to brood over it.

He felt terribly nervous when he found himself once again in the little sitting-room he knew so well, where everything reminded him of Mary Cressburn. There over in the corner was the sofa on which they had been seated when he told his stumbling tale of love. That was the identical book she had trifled with whilst she listened to his professions of eternal devotion. Here was—Miss Parkins coming in, with hostility written on every line of her face. Any little remnant of courage he had brought with him vanished like smoke. Miss Parkins bowed to him without speaking, and seated herself rigidly on a chair, whilst Peter collapsed into the farthest seat he could find.

'Well, Mr Magsdale,' she said, 'what is it?'

'I wanted to see Mary,' replied Peter, with a very pale face.

'Mary does not want to see you, Mr Magsdale.—Did you happen to receive anything from Messrs Carrel and Stalker?'

'I came about their letter,' he said hesitatingly.

Miss Parkins' manner was so stern and uncompromising that his nervousness increased, and he could not go on.

'Yes, Mr Magsdale?' said the lady, by way of encouragement; then, seeing his disquietude, she continued: 'I am indebted to Mrs Cornelia Bunshaw for the recommendation to take legal steps.'

The shock was too much for Peter. 'Mrs Bunshaw!' he screamed, bounding from his chair—'Mrs Bunshaw!'

'Yes, Mr Magsdale. I called at Astley Villa a few days ago, and had the pleasure—Mercy on us!' exclaimed Miss Parkins, rising in her turn. 'Is he going to have a fit?'

It looked exceedingly like it, for Peter's eyes were starting from his head and he was trembling like a leaf. His faculties were hardly clear; but light was breaking in upon him: that must have been the 'case' she had spoken of so feelingly to Miss Terripeg and himself. But why had she concealed the fact that she knew him to be the sinner? He pulled himself together with a great effort, and turned to Miss Parkins. 'She didn't know you were referring to me?'

'Most assuredly she did, Mr Magsdale,' replied the lady, recovering her composure as Peter grew calm, 'though I did not know, when I first saw her, that she was your cousin.'

'Her cousin!' Cornelia had imagined that Allan was the faithless lover! She would soon be enlightened; it was only another slight addition to the muddle; a small one, perhaps, but still it would not improve matters. It would answer no purpose to explain the mistake to Miss Parkins, and he hardly thought of doing so; he

was too anxious to strike a blow at the impending legal measures.

'I came to say that I never meant Mary to suppose that I had deserted her,' he said.

'I'll tell her,' responded Miss Parkins tersely.

'I'm quite as anxious to marry her now as I ever was.'

'I'll tell her,' repeated the old lady.

'I still consider myself engaged to her,' continued Peter, to whom confession brought relief.

'I'll tell her,' was the only answer vouchsafed.

'May I not see Mary?'

'I think not, this evening, Mr Magsdale. I will speak to her, and let you know whether she wishes to renew your acquaintance or not.—Now you had better go.'

It had been an unsatisfactory visit on the whole, though he had accomplished his object in making it. Miss Parkins clearly understood that there were no real grounds of action against him, and his readiness to fulfil his engagement completely dissolved any that she believed to exist. He could not go home just yet; it was only half-past nine, and if he returned before Cornelia had retired for the night, he would have to submit to a searching cross-examination on the business which had kept him late. Moreover, if Miss Terripeg were there, he should be obliged to walk home with her, and the events of the day had not been of a nature to endear that task to him.

He turned northwards, and set out, striving to rest his brain by wearying his limbs. He walked far and fast, and it was long after eleven when he stood before his own gate. Everything was in darkness, and the household had evidently gone to bed. It was rather a nuisance, for Mrs Bunshaw had deprived him of that reveller's friend his latchkey soon after Allan's departure, and he would have to wake them up before he could get in. He rang once, softly, but disturbed no one. Then again, harder. Still no result. A third time violently, without producing any effect. He set to work and tugged at the handle until he heard the bell pealing wildly in the back premises, but still nobody appeared to be roused by it. He was very tired; and after his last effort, he sat down on the doorstep to rest, wondering what had happened within. Now sitting on one's doorstep is not a congenial occupation, or one conducive to health when indulged in at midnight in December, and before Peter had been there five minutes he had sneezed twice with resounding vehemence, and recognised with rising temper that he was 'catching cold.' Sternutation, however, did for him what the bell had failed to accomplish—a fact which would appear as inexplicable to us as it did for the moment to him, did we not know that Cornelia had been seated all the time behind her closed shutters, waiting with judicial patience until she considered it advisable to admit him. She heard him sneeze and remembered his delicate chest. It would never do to have him laid up; so, just as he took hold of the bell-handle again, a window was thrown open, and Mrs Bunshaw looked out, demanding to be informed who was there. When Peter saw his sister, he grasped the situation, and comprehended the singularly profound repose which enwrapped the rest of the household.

'It is I,' he answered irritably.

'Well, what's the matter?' asked Mrs Bunshaw in tones which would have led a casual hearer to suppose that it was Peter's acknowledged habit to sleep on the doorstep when he came home late. 'What do you want?'

'I—I want to get in,' replied her brother, with chattering teeth.

'Pray, do you know what time it is?' she asked.

'I don't know. I was detained (sneeze). I really couldn't get home any sooner' (sneeze).

Mrs Bunshaw referred his appeal to the higher court of Principle to obtain its views about the propriety of entertaining it, and a long pause was thus necessitated. 'I will let you in this time, Peter,' she said at length, as though by doing so she incurred grave responsibility. 'Miss Terripeg was here this evening, and I am much vexed at your behaviour.—There is the key,' she continued, throwing it down to him. 'I will speak to you about this in the morning.' Peter clutched the key, and let himself in, breathing a silent but earnest prayer of gratitude for the whim which had moved his sister to let him go to bed in peace.

The next morning he awoke with a cold so severe that he could not get up, and as Cornelia considered suspense had a softening and beneficial effect, she delayed calling him to account until the evening; but before then she had a visitor in the person of Miss Parkins, who came to tell her of the result produced by the solicitors' letter.

'I knew it would bring him on his knees,' said Mrs Bunshaw at the end of Miss Parkins' story.

'He is willing, nay, anxious to adhere to his engagement; and I think Mary will forgive him, being unaware of the means with which we have brought him back.'

'Our sole object of course is to secure your niece's rights,' said Mrs Bunshaw, after a minute's thought. 'If you will bring her to see me to-morrow, we will see what more can be done, though I do not think we can do anything further now.'

Miss Parkins took her leave, promising to bring Mary Cressburn the following day, and Cornelia went up-stairs to see the recalcitrant Peter. She found him seated by the fire, a hoarse and woe-begone victim of catarrh, and took up her station opposite him in solemn silence. 'I will say nothing about your late return last night, Peter,' she began after a time, 'nor will I refer to the occupation which detained you; for that you are sufficiently punished already. I feel it my duty, however, to speak to you very seriously about Anna Terripeg.'

Peter fidgeted and looked a shade unhappier than he did when she came in, but said nothing.

'You know that your demeanour towards her has not been that of an ordinary acquaintance.'

'I don't know how; she is no more than an ordinary acquaintance.'

'I can't believe that you mean what you say, Peter. During the past month I have looked upon her in the light of a sister.'

Peter muttered something about his willingness to look upon her in the light of a sister too; but the concession was unacceptable, and earned him a severe snub for his improper levity.

'She will be here to-morrow. She has never doubted that you mean to make her your wife; and to draw back now would be to jilt her—yes, to jilt her,' for he started at the word. 'You must speak to-morrow.'

The time had come to put an end to this dream of Cornelia's, and Peter roused himself to do it. Engaged as he was to Mary Cressburn, he could not allow it to go any further. 'If Miss Terripeg has any idea of the kind, Cornelia, your words, and not mine, have given it to her. I've shown her the usual civility due to a friend, and nothing more, in spite of your palpable efforts to throw us together, which I couldn't prevent.'

'I know what Anna thinks, and how she has come to regard you. She has opened her heart to me and shown me her inmost thoughts.'

'She wouldn't have done that unless you had given her sympathy and encouragement.'

'How could I refuse to sympathise with her, knowing her as I do, and believing in your honesty?—I will say nothing more now,' said she, rising; 'but before you meet her again, weigh carefully what I have said.'

'I have never said a word to Miss Terripeg that might not be said to any acquaintance.'

'Though you have bound yourself by no promise,' said Mrs Bunshaw in her most impressive platform tones, 'she has your unspoken pledge, which is as sacred, in the eyes of an honourable man. A relation of mine who breaks his word to a woman, need expect nothing from me when I have done with this world's goods,' she added, and she left him, after firing this as a parting shot. In her own mind she knew well that there was great truth in Peter's assertion that she had encouraged her friend to believe that he meant to marry her. 'But his attentions were so patent,' she argued to herself; 'he was always begging me to have her here, and used to be quite restless until he could have her to himself to take home.'

Up-stairs, Peter was reproaching himself with his share in the business, in happy ignorance of the crisis which was impending the next day.

Mrs Bunshaw had arranged a little tea-party, at which all our friends were to be present to witness the reconciliation of Allan and Mary Cressburn, and, if possible, the betrothal of Peter to Anna Terripeg. With regard to the latter couple, Cornelia had very grave doubts, but she meant to do her best to bring the engagement about.

Every one has arrived, and Mrs Bunshaw has gone away for a moment to call Peter; so Allan takes advantage of her absence to say something to Mary Cressburn. 'His sister simply rules him. I am certain that nothing but his dread of her interference made him so reluctant to let you know her. He came to me the other day after I last saw you, and was half mad at the idea of losing you, as he thought you meant to give him up.'

Allan was doing all he could to patch up the quarrel, and was on a fair way to success, for Mary knew nothing of Messrs Carrel and Stalker's letter.

She did not answer his arguments. She had told Miss Parkins that she had done with Peter and his love when her last letter to him remained unanswered. Had she been too hasty? Was he the poor weak but faithful creature his cousin

made him out? She loved him still, in spite of his neglect and the unmanly feelings which had caused it. Yes; if he would make amends now, here before his friends and her own, she would forgive him, but it should be his last chance.

Her thoughts were interrupted by the entry of Mrs Bunshaw and her brother. He did not know Miss Cressburn was in the house; but on being told that Miss Terripeg was there, he silently resolved to declare his engagement to the former in the presence of the latter. Whatever unpleasantness might result, it would put a final stop to the scheming which could only be productive of pain to one and vexation to the other.

Cornelia was posing for an opening speech, and did not see the start he gave when he found Miss Cressburn in the room; she gave rein to her organ of language at once, and proceeded to make everything nice and comfortable before she descended to domestic affairs and rang for tea. She addressed her cousin first, and the magnanimous kindness of her remarks would have moved most men of good feeling to tears. We deeply regret to record that the effect upon Allan was far otherwise. He grinned; openly and undisguisedly grinned.

'I was most unwilling to believe, Allan, that you had laid yourself open to suspicions which, if just, would have thrown so dark a shadow upon the hitherto unblemished name of Magsdale. I have invited you here this evening to meet Miss Mary Cressburn. I trust you have explained your conduct towards her, and earned my forgiveness by obtaining hers, for causing her to doubt that your promise'—

The looks of blank astonishment on three faces brought her speech, which was only gathering way, to an abrupt termination. Everybody looked at everybody else, and then stared so hard and meaningly at Mrs Bunshaw, that she paused.

Miss Parkins was the first to recover the use of her tongue, and she hastened to put Cornelia right. 'You are making some unaccountable mistake, Mrs Bunshaw. Your cousin, Mr Peter Magsdale, was engaged to my niece.'

'Peter!' shrieked Mrs Bunshaw and Miss Terripeg in a breath—'PETER!!'

The hero of this story saw that the moment had come. He walked across the room and took Mary's hand with doubting gentleness; she let him retain it, and he knew he was forgiven. Her presence strengthened him, and he spoke firmly: 'I am engaged to marry Miss Cressburn,' he said.

For a moment there was a dead silence. Cornelia stood pale but calm, gazing sadly on the pair before her. Her hopes and plans had been defeated; and she, in her blind anxiety to do what she thought right, had done much to destroy them. She would not betray her disappointment; she had undertaken to obtain justice for Mary Cressburn, and the identity of the lover was an element which must not be allowed to affect her pledge. She had, only yesterday, solemnly charged Peter to remember that a promise spoken or unspoken was a thing sacred, and she must not bid him retract the one he had given, now.

'Is this true, Peter?' she said in a low voice.

'It is quite true.'

Miss Terripeg, who had been eagerly waiting for his reply, fell back on the sofa in hysterics;

and Cornelia said her last word as she moved over to her assistance: 'You might have trusted me to stand your friend, Peter. For the sake of the girl you have allowed to suffer, and to whom you have so tardily made amends, I will not turn your enemy now. The mistake was mine.'

And this was the end of Peter Magsdale's Courtship, for he married Mary Cressburn three weeks later.

FIGHTING-COCKS IN SCHOOLS.

It is highly probable that the Romans introduced cock-fighting into England. This cruel sport was for a long period extremely popular amongst men and boys. One of the earliest if not the first account of the pastime being practised by school-boys occurs in a *Description of the City of London*, by William Fitzstephen, who wrote in the reign of Henry II., and died in the year 1191. He records that it was the annual custom on Shrove-Tuesday for the boys to bring to the schools their gamecocks, to turn the schoolrooms into cockpits, the masters and pupils spending the morning in witnessing the birds fight.

In many instances, teachers derived much of their income from payments made by their boys for providing fighting-cocks for this cruel and barbarous amusement. The masters generally claimed as their perquisites the runaway birds and those killed in battle. Our old school regulations and accounts contain many allusions to this subject. In the town accounts of Congleton is a payment: '1601. Payd John Wagge for dressynge the schoolhouse at the great [Congleton] cock-fyghte, 0. 0. 4.' Wreay School, on the banks of Windermere Lake, was famous for this pastime. Mr Graham, a Westmoreland Squire, bequeathed to the school a silver bell, to be fought for every year. 'About three weeks previous to Shrove-Tuesday,' says a well-informed writer, 'the boys fixed upon two of their schoolfellows for captains whose parents were able and willing to bear the expense of the approaching contest; and the master on entering school was saluted by the boys throwing up their caps and the exclamation of "Dux! Dux!" After an early dinner on Shrove-Tuesday, the two captains, attended by their friends and schoolfellows, who were distinguished by blue and red ribbons, marched in procession from their respective homes to the village green, where each produced three cocks; and the bell was appended to the hat of the victor, in which manner it was handed down from one successful captain to another.' This custom lingered until 1836.

A clergyman informed Mr William Henderson, for publication in his *Folklore of the Northern Counties of England*, issued in 1879, that when he was a scholar at Sedbergh grammar-school, Yorkshire, the master used to be entitled to fourpence-halfpenny yearly from every boy on Shrove-Tuesday for purchasing a fighting-cock. At Heversham, near Milnthorpe, says Mr Henderson, the cockpit was in existence close to the school a few years ago. The regulations of the Kendal grammar-school provided that it 'be free to all the boys resident in the parish of Kendal, for classics alone, excepting a voluntary payment of a cock-penny, as aforetime, at Shrovetide, &c.'

At the grammar-school of Grange-over-Sand, it appears from a local historian that gratuitous payment was expected from the parents of each pupil. It varied in amount according to the social standing of the parents, and at the commencement of the present century ranged from two shillings and sixpence to five pounds. The money was known as cockpence, and doubtless originated with the old practice of providing gamecocks.

Debts of fighting-cocks often formed important items in old school accounts. Here is an example drawn from Sir James Mackintosh's bill, from the master of Fortrose School: '1776-7. To cocks'-fight dues for 2 years 2s. 6d. each, 5s. 0d.'

The Duke of York in the year 1681 introduced the sport into Scotland. Two years later, a cock-pit was set up at Leith, and it attracted so much attention that, in 1704, the town-council of Edinburgh prohibited it as 'an impediment to business.' After much debate, it was finally agreed to confine the sport at Leith to one day yearly. The barbarous pastime soon became popular in schools, and masters managed to profit by it. In Sir John Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, published in 1792, in an article by the minister of Applecross, county of Ross, it is stated the schoolmaster's income is 'composed of two hundred merks, with 1s. 6d. and 2s. 6d. per quarter from each scholar; and the cock-fight dues, which are equal to one quarter's payment from each scholar.' The Rev. Dr Edgar, in his *Old Church Life in Scotland*, referring to the school at Mauchline, states that 'the owners of the cocks paid to the schoolmaster a small sum in name of entry money; and those who did not provide a combatant had to pay an extra sum for admission to the spectacle. It was a gala day in the schoolmaster's calendar, for not only had he the benefit of pocketing the entry and admission money, but had the privilege of picking up the carcasses of the slain and seizing the persons of the fugitives.' 'Daddy Auld' stopped the sport at Mauchline in the year 1782. It was continued in other schools to a much later time.

Hugh Miller, the famous geologist, who was born in the year 1802, in his popular volume, *My Schools and Schoolmasters*, gives a graphic account of the amusement in the Cromarty grammar-school where he received his education. 'The school,' says Miller, 'like almost all other grammar-schools of the period in Scotland, had its yearly cock-fight, preceded by two holidays and a half, during which the boys occupied themselves in collecting and bringing up the cocks. And such always was the array of fighting birds mustered on the occasion, that the day of the festival from morning till night used to be spent in fighting out the battle. For weeks after it had passed the school floor continued to retain its deeply stained blotches of blood, and the boys would be full of exciting narratives regarding the glories of gallant birds who had continued to fight until their eyes had been pecked out; or who, in the moment of victory, had dropped dead in the middle of the cockpit.' Miller at some length denounces the cruel sport.

Church bells were often rung in England in honour of winning cocks. Kings frequently attended the battles. Henry VIII. encouraged the sport, and James I. greatly enjoyed it.

Cromwell prohibited it in the year 1658; but no sooner had the Second Charles ascended the throne than it was revived, and under royal favour was a popular diversion, and battles were fought in most unlikely places. It is stated in the parish register of Hemingborough, Yorkshire, as follows: 'Feb. 2, 1661. Upon fastene day last they came with their cocks to the church, and faught them in the church—namely, Thos. Middleton, of Cliff, John Coats, Ed. Widhouse, and John Batley.'

Several attempts were made to check this cruel pastime, and it was finally prohibited in the year 1849.

In the days of old, throwing at cocks was a popular sport. Its origin is almost lost in the dim historic past. Some writers trace it back to the time when the Danes ruled England. The foreign masters were hard on the Saxons, and held them in subjection which was as bad as slavery. The inhabitants of an English city determined to make a bold attempt for freedom, and formed a conspiracy against the Danes who were placed over them. It was resolved that on a certain dark winter's night a dozen brave men should secretly repair to the town-house, overpower the guard, and seize the arms which were kept there. When that had been effected, a signal was to be made, and the English were to leave their houses and slay the invaders. The operations had no sooner been commenced, than the noise made disturbed the cocks roosting in the building, and a loud crowing was the result. The unusual circumstance put the guard on the alert, who speedily ended the well-planned scheme of liberty. The Danes, it is said, doubled their cruelty to the conspirators.

After the English were freed from the Danish yoke, they are said to have instituted in the city the sport of throwing at cocks, in revenge for the misery their crowing had occasioned. The pastime became popular, and soon spread throughout the land. Shrove-Tuesday was set apart for the sport, being the day the effort was made to murder the Danes. In course of time, cock-throwing became an amusement recognised by parish officials, and it frequently figures in old accounts. The profits from the sport were frequently given to the churchwardens for the relief of the poor. The parish accounts of Pinner, near Harrow-on-the-Hill, may be quoted as an example: '1622. Received from the cocks at Shrovetide, 12s. 0d. 1628. Received for cocks in Tounne, 19s. 0d. Out of Tounne, 0s. 6d.'

The cock was tied with a piece of string to a stake driven into the ground, and a small sum was charged for throwing at it with short clubs. In later times, three throws for three-pence was the ordinary price. If the marksman killed the bird, or knocked it down and run and caught it before it regained its feet, it became his property. The cocks were trained to evade the blows of the throwers. It was a common practice for schoolmasters to provide cocks for the diversion of their pupils. Kings even engaged in the sport. In a copy of some household accounts we read: 'March 2, 7 Hen. VII. Item to Master Bray for rewards to them that brought cockes at Shrovetide to Westminster, xxs.'

Many attempts were made to stop this sport. There is a charge of 2s. 6d. in the corporation accounts of Worcester in 1745 for crying down cock-throwing. A paragraph in the *Northampton Mercury* of February 1788 states: 'We cannot but express our wishes that persons in power, as well as parents and masters of families, would exert their authority in suppressing a practice too common at this season of the year—throwing at cocks, a custom which, to the credit of civilised people, is annually declining.' It lingered until a late period in many parts of the country, and was finally prohibited. At Wakefield, the magistrates stopped it about the year 1865.

THE LOST WAGER.

FORTUNE has queer methods of distributing her favours, and the way she showed her partiality for Gustavus Chuler was to give him a rich father. The head of the Chulers was not only an Alderman of the City of London and a Warden of a great Company, but he was also in the running, as Gustavus somewhat figuratively put it, for the Mayoralty Plate. In attending to his many offices, Chuler senior so succeeded in exhausting the labour market that nothing was left for Gustavus to do but play pool, billiards, stroll down Pall-Mall, and take to himself other soul-stirring and vigorous recreations. In this walk of life he was ably aided and abetted by a companion in leisure named Nathaniel Blossom, an ingenious inventor of expedients, not to catch Time by the forelock, but rather to push him along. By a stroke of fate, it happened that Gustavus one fine morning came across Mr Blossom in Bond Street, and after remarking on their happy conjunction, invited Nathaniel to walk with him. Some way down the street the pair stopped before the plate-glass front of Tompkins, their trusty and trusting tailor. Behind the window, in addition to the 'newest in tweeds,' there had lately been arranged a miniature Madame Tussaud's of stony-faced waxen figures.

'I say, Gus,' said Mr Blossom, in a thoughtful tone, 'what a lot of dummies Tompkins has got in his window! That's the way our money goes, old fellow, to clothe those wax beggars.'

Considering the many vain overtures Mr Tompkins had been making to Nathaniel for the settlement of his last little account, the providing of raiment for dummies could only by a stretch of the imagination be said to affect Mr Blossom's exchequer.

'I do believe,' went on Nathaniel, 'that our respected creditor puts them in the window to stare us out of countenance. There is one in the middle whose glassy eye goes through me. He seems to say: "Now, pay up, Nat, or into court you go." I can't stand it. I must quit the scene. Come!'

'Stop a minute,' cried Gustavus, detaining him. 'Have you ever noticed, Nat, what a resemblance even a living man bears to a dummy when he is standing in a tailor's window? I would

bet ten pounds that I could stand there all day and never be taken for anything but a dummy.'

'It is possible,' answered Mr Blossom dryly; 'but for all that, I'll take you. Ten or twenty?'

'By Jove,' exclaimed Gustavus, 'you didn't think I meant it as a bet, Nat?'

'I certainly did, dear boy; but of course if you say you didn't, why'—Mr Blossom made a movement with his hand, and blew in the air, as if he waived Mr Chuler's rashness to the clouds.

'No,' replied Gustavus firmly; 'I am not going to slip out of it that way. Having made the bet, I stand by it, and, win or lose, I'm your man. Let it be ten.'

'Done!' cried Mr Blossom joyously.—'And now, friend of my soul, the goblet sip; let us seal the compact in the flowing bowl. Let an agile hansom convey us swiftly through the madding crowd to Italia's son, the dark-browed Tavalio, who is compelled by circumstances over which he has no control to conduct a restaurant in the Strand. There we will carouse.'

That night, due to the receipt of mysterious messages, the friends of both Mr Chuler and Nathaniel Blossom assembled in unwonted numbers at the house of entertainment presided over by the dark-browed Tavalio. Amidst the greatest excitement, Mr Blossom set forth the subject of the bet, and placed Gustavus in the position of a man of mark. A committee was hastily formed to promote the undertaking; and it was resolved that the time allowed for Mr Chuler to carry out his impersonation of the Living Dummy be one hour, and the place, the window of the suffering Tompkins, who, under threat of the loss of the whole custom of the gathering, was to give his consent. Then the party grew exceedingly merry, and the bosom's lord of Mr Chuler sat so lightly on its throne that he insisted upon standing champagne all round.

During the early part of the next day, Nathaniel Blossom received private information that his friend, Mr Gustavus Chuler, had, after much labour, won over the tailor to his cause, and that at three o'clock the same afternoon, the sartorial Tussaud's in Tompkins' window would be augmented by his living presence. A post-script further informed Mr Blossom that the bet would be declared 'off' if there were any grimacing through the window.

A trifle after three o'clock that afternoon, a curious proceeding might have been witnessed in Bond Street. Never before had so many fashionably dressed young men been known to take such an absorbing interest in the various samples of 'checks' and 'diagonals' in Tompkins' window; and never, in the memory of the oldest assistant, had there been such a review of impenitent debtors past the open door. The attitude of Mr Chuler was decidedly striking. Placed in the very midst of the tailor's dummies, and displaying to the utmost advantage the artistic cut of a suit of tweed 'Cheap at £4, 10s.,' his limbs had adopted a painful rigidity, and his countenance a fearful vacancy. Amongst those acquainted with the subject of the bet, the impression prevailed that it was a marvellous resemblance, and that Gustavus would win in a canter.

One of the most assiduous of the window-gazers was, as might be expected, Mr Nathaniel Blossom; and a quarter of an hour short of the time of winning the wager, this gifted gentleman was admiringly eyeing the motionless form of his accomplished friend. 'It's nearly over,' he said below his breath. 'He'll do it now, sure enough. He has acted a dummy to the life.—Why, what the dickens is the matter with him?'

The last ejaculation of the astonished Nathaniel was called forth by an extraordinary transformation which suddenly came over the countenance of Gustavus. The face of the Living Dummy grew ghastly pale, and his eyes became set in wild and terror-stricken frenzy, while his limbs visibly trembled beneath him.

'He is going to have a fit,' thought Mr Blossom. 'It has been too much for him. I had better go in at once and alarm Tompkins before he falls through the glass.' Turning round with this benevolent intention, Mr Blossom immediately became aware of a presence which caused him to become almost as violently agitated as his unfortunate friend; for, gazing directly over his shoulder, with every feature denoting amazement and fury, stood the portly form of Chuler senior. What the general public had failed to discover, had been quickly detected by the paternal eye. For a second or two Chuler senior stood as if petrified, as if discrediting the evidence of his senses; then, casting a lowering and awful look upon his unhappy offspring, he bounded into the shop. Hardly knowing what he was about, Nathaniel followed. Tompkins was standing in the middle of the shop rubbing his hands. With a wrathful brow, the scandalised candidate for first-citizenship strode up to him. 'Are you the proprietor of that peepshow in the window?' he asked in a choky voice.

The tailor, with a bewildered look, bowed obsequiously; he seemed in doubt as to whether the title of showman was meant as an honour or otherwise.

'Then,' thundered Chuler senior, turning an apoplectic tint, 'what inducements have you held out to my son to make an ass of himself amongst your wax monstrosities? What is the meaning of his ridiculous position, sir? Have you no better advertisement of your miserable tweeds and checks? Or is this a deliberate insult to me—to me, sir—an Alderman of the City of London?—Speak! or I'll do you a mischief on your own premises!'

Tompkins drew back and turned pale. 'It's only a little bit of a lark, sir,' he said soothingly. 'Some young gent's bet. Mr Gustavus is impersonating the Living Dummy.'

'The Living Dummy!' cried Mr Chuler, stupefied. 'A son of Mine—the Living Dummy!' He glared at Tompkins as if the tailor had answered him with a parable.

Further explanation, however, was unneeded, for at this moment the glass door which divided the shop from the window slowly opened, and the Living Dummy himself, looking very dazed and forlorn, stepped into view. The spectacle was too much for the author of his being, and the Alderman sank upon a chair. Gustavus followed his example, and, without a word, they sat and gazed at each other. For a while Chuler senior seemed in danger of suffocation; but at

last he found his speech. 'Send for a cab!' he gasped faintly.

Gustavus threw an imploring glance in the direction of the sneaking figure of Mr Blossom, and that friend of his soul instantly responded to it by going outside and hailing the vehicle required. Meanwhile, the news had got abroad that a member of the swell-mob had been taken in the act of impersonating one of the tailor's dummies with the object of a night-attack. As the alderman was the first to come out, he was identified with the culprit, and the remarks that were made upon him drove him nearly frantic. It was only when the abashed form of Gustavus crept into the cab, still unconsciously wearing the condemnatory card of 'Cheap at £4, 10s., that this illusion was dispelled.

By the next day's post Mr Nathaniel Blossom received from his friend Gustavus Chuler a lugubrious epistle, which set forth that the writer's state of health necessitated an immediate trip to the Highlands of Scotland. The envelope contained, in addition to this afflicting information, a Bank of England note for ten pounds, forfeit to Mr Blossom for a lost wager.

'SLOYD.'

OUR educational system, in one way and another, has recently been attracting a good deal of attention. One of the most significant signs of movement with the times is the Association just forming for promoting the teaching of 'sloyd' over the United Kingdom. This system has for some time past been an important factor in the educational systems of several European countries. The great beauty lies in the fact that it educates a child morally, physically, and mentally. Sweden was the originator of this system of manual instruction, which is not, as is frequently supposed, merely wood-carving, but is the system applied to the different kinds of handiwork for educational purposes. *Slöjd*, the Scandinavian word, which is termed 'sloyd' in England for convenience, means originally 'cunning,' 'clever,' 'handy.' The results at which the system specially aims is to implant respect for work in general, even for the coarser forms of manual labour; to develop activity; to foster order, cleanliness, neatness, and accuracy; to encourage attention, industry, and perseverance; to develop the physical powers and to train the eye and the sense of form. It is intended to teach all classes, from the highest to the lowest, how to use their hands as well as their heads, so that each man and woman may be placed in a position of independence and be capable of earning an honest livelihood.

We have been particularly fortunate in obtaining one of the chief Swedish authorities on the system in the person of Miss Myström, who has been engaged in London in adapting the system to English requirements. Active preparations are being made to instruct those desirous of becoming teachers. The course is arranged in series. The first article which learners have to make is a little pointer, using merely a knife

and glass-paper; from such articles they proceed to more difficult ones—making rulers, inkstands, brackets, and so forth. Attendance at the classes is voluntary on the part of the pupil, so that there are certain conditions which the work must fulfil. It should be useful, and not too fatiguing; the articles made should offer variety, and should not be articles of luxury; they should be accomplished without help, and they should be real work, and not play. A necessary feature, too, is that they should demand thoughtfulness, and not be purely mechanical work. Many will no doubt here say, 'It is nothing more nor less than ordinary carpentering.' On consideration, however, it will be found there are several differences—first and foremost comes the difference in the *object* of sloyd, which is not to turn out young carpenters, but to develop the faculties, and especially to give general dexterity, which will be of value no matter what line of life the pupil may afterwards pursue. Other differences are—the character of the objects made, which are usually smaller than those made in the trade: the tools used; the knife, for instance—the most important of all in sloyd—is little used in ordinary carpentry; and lastly, the manner of working is not the same: the division of labour employed in the carpentering trade is not allowed in sloyd, where each article is executed entirely by each pupil.

Truancy has almost been done away with in Swedish schools since the introduction of sloyd. It has been found in all the schools where it has been introduced that greater and more intelligent progress has been made in the ordinary school-work. It makes children think for themselves. The system demands individual supervision and instruction, which is an advantage, as the teacher is enabled to gain an insight into the character, and to establish a personal relation between himself and his pupils.

In regard to the statement that it promotes the physical, mental, and moral development, we find that morally it implants respect and love for work in general; it strengthens the bond between home and school; and it fosters a sense of satisfaction in honest work, begun, carried on, and completed by fair means. Mentally, sloyd acts in drawing out and exercising energy, perseverance, order, accuracy, and the habit of attention; it causes pupils to rely on themselves, to exercise forethought, and to be constantly putting two and two together. Physically, the system brings into action all the muscles, and exercises both sides of the body. Pupils work with the left hand and arm, as well as with the right, in sawing, planing, &c. Sloyd is particularly useful to the girls of our higher schools, and is more important for them than their sisters of the working classes. The former are sadly in want of some interesting active work to counterbalance the continual sitting and poring over books and exercises. Besides the general development it furnishes, the positive knowledge gained is of the greatest service, and serves to stimulate a growing experience of sympathy with men's work.

The first course for training teachers in England commenced in August, at the Ladies' College at Sydenham, which has been kindly lent for the purpose. Hitherto, those who would be teachers of sloyd have had to travel to the seminary

at Märis, on the beautiful shores of Lake Savelingen; and after going through the course there, have had to face the difficulty of applying the system to English tastes and customs. Now, they will not have quite so long a journey to undertake to gain instruction; and the knowledge they do gain will be such as they can impart straight away to pupils. In order to counteract the evil of spurious teachers cropping up, there will be inspectors appointed, who will be allowed to visit any places where sloyd is taught at any time, to see that the system is carried out properly and faithfully.

From the foregoing sketch, some idea of the importance of this new feature in our educational system may be gleaned. The British people are slowly awakening from their lethargy, and are at length making a stir to place themselves on a more equal footing with our wary continental brethren. Sloyd is one step in the right direction; for we want *whole* men and women whose faculties are developed to their fullest extent, and who have learnt to apply their knowledge not only in emergencies but in the daily events of life. We must not overlook the fact that all skilled work, however humble it may appear, is brain-work too. In a system of tried value like sloyd, if it is successful in taking firm root here, it is destined to influence a wide moral and social influence, and raise us in some degree out of our deplorable state of coma. In addition to its social and moral value, it is now widely recognised as the basis of technical education. Great things must not of course be expected all at once; for not only have children to be made interested in such occupations, but teachers have to be trained to initiate them into successful methods.

IN THE TIME OF YULE.

ONCE more the dear old Yule comes round,
And hands, heart-warmed, close fast again,
While far and wide rings out the sound:
'Peace upon earth—good-will to men.'

New life, new strength, for coming years,
When souls are knit, in days to be,
By griefs and joys, by hopes and fears,
Of one great, grand humanity.

The common tie of common need,
The human tie of suffering,
May bind together hearts that bleed,
When life's glad bird no more can sing.

No bird can sing the whole year through,
No rose can bloom in Winter's blast,
And yet o'er hearts both brave and true
Some errant beam of light is cast.

And generous trust that looks above,
With noble aims and sympathies,
Shall teach the wounded heart that love
An infinite forgiveness is.

HARRIET KENDALL.

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